



Drug and DUI Courts: "The Time is Now"

The Judicial Council of Georgia Standing Committee on Drug Courts hosted its second annual Drug and DUI Court Conference on May 10-12 in Peachtree City. "Georgia Drug Courts: The Time is Now" was attended by approximately 145 drug and DUI court stakeholders from around the state.

Words of Welcome

A group of notable government and private sector speakers wel-

comed the participants including Justice P. Harris Hines, Supreme Court of Georgia; Attorney General Thurbert Baker; Judge George H. Kreeger, Chair of the Standing Committee; Mr. Bob Dallas,



Senior Judge John E. Girardeau (left) and Judge George H. Kreeger listen as Chief Judge Tommy Day Wilcox accepts a recognition award at the conference.

Governor's Office of Highway Safety; and Mr. Mike Mears,

Director of the Georgia Public Defender Standards Council. The event was coordinated by the staff of

the AOC Governmental Affairs Division.

Pioneers Honored

Two of the state's pioneers in the Drug and DUI Court



Justice Harris Hines opened the day.

movement were honored at the conference. Chief Judge Tommy Day Wilcox, Macon Judicial Circuit, was recognized for his contribution as the first Georgia judge to create a drug court in 1994. An award for his distinguished service was presented

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Clerk of Supreme Court Retires

Ms. Sherie M. Welch, Clerk of the Supreme Court of Georgia, will retire on July 31, 2006, after 31 years with the court.

After graduating from Emory Law School in 1975, Ms. Welch began her career with the Supreme Court as a law assistant to Justice Robert H. Hall.

She also worked for three Chief Justices: Hiram K. Undercofler,

Harold N. Hill, Jr., and Willis B. Hunt, Jr. In 1992, she was appointed the eighth Clerk of Court.

Ms. Welch is a Connecticut native and is married to Mr. William F. Welch, senior partner at Welch Spell Attorneys.

On June 13, 2006, the Supreme Court announced the appointment of Ms. Therese "Tee" Barnes to

succeed Ms. Welch as Clerk of Court. ☺



Ms. Sherie Welch.

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People, Places and Events ...

In Memoriam

✱ **Judge Dupont Cheney** of Hinesville died February 18, 2006. Judge Cheney, an assistant magistrate in Liberty County since 1999, formerly served as the District Attorney of the Atlantic Judicial Circuit, a post he held since 1976. Judge Cheney graduated from Mercer University Walter F. George School of Law.

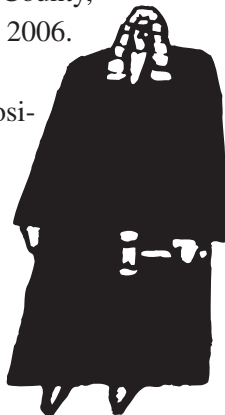
✱ **Senior Judge James L. Bullard** of Marietta died April 12, 2006. In 1965 Judge Bullard was elected to the Civil and Criminal Court of Cobb County, which later became the State Court of Cobb County. From 1972-1985, he served on the Superior Court bench of the Cobb Judicial Circuit.

Judge Bullard served in the US Army during World War II, taking part in the landing at Omaha Beach in June, 1944. After his discharge, he earned an LLB from Emory University and served as a Staff Judge Advocate in the Army Reserve. He retired from the Army in 1984 as a full Colonel.

✱ **Mr. Gary Christy** of Atlanta died May 20, 2006, from complications related to heart surgery. A practicing attorney, Mr. Christy formerly served as District Attorney in the Cordele Judicial Circuit. He was a member of the Judicial Qualifications Commission; he also served on the Board of Court Reporting for a numbers of years.

Transitions

✱ **Judge Kelly D. Turner**, State Court of Lowndes County, retired on May 31, 2006. Judge Turner was appointed to the position in 1995. She also served as a magistrate in Lowndes County. Judge Turner has assumed senior status.



✱ In a ceremony held on June 7, 2006, in the House Chambers of the State Capitol, **Judge John K. Edwards, Jr.**, (see photo below) was sworn-in by Gov. Sonny Perdue as the new judge of the State Court of Lowndes County.

Formerly Judge Edwards was judge of the Municipal Court of Valdosta and president of the Council of Municipal Court Judges.

✱ **Ms. Leila Taafe**, Director of the Office of Dispute Resolution, has announced her resignation effective

June 30, 2006. Ms. Taafe, who began work with ODR in 2000, plans to move to Washington, D.C., where her husband will be working with the Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellowship.

Honors

✱ On April 28, **Justice Robert Benham**, Supreme Court of Georgia, received the University of Georgia Alumni Association's Alumni Merit Award. The award recognizes UGA graduates for loyal support of the university and the Alumni Association, as well for professional leadership. Justice Benham is a 1970 graduate of UGA School of Law.

✱ **Chief Judge Brenda S. Weaver**, Appalachian Judicial Circuit, was presented with the Candlelight Award on April 25 during a workshop sponsored by the circuit's Domestic Violence Task Force. Each year, the award is given to an individual "whose one little flame lights the way for many."

New State Court Judge Takes Oath

Judge John K. Edwards, Jr., takes the oath of office from Gov. Sonny Perdue on June 7, 2006.



People, Places and Events ...

✳ **Judge Cynthia D. Wright**, Atlanta Judicial Circuit, was honored recently with the 2006 Jack P. Turner Professionalism Award given by the State Bar of Georgia's Family Law Section.

Judge Wright becomes the first sitting judge to be honored with the Turner Professionalism Award for "her contributions to the advancement of family law practice and for demonstrated professionalism as a member of the bench."

✳ **Judge G. Carey Nelson**, Cherokee Judicial Circuit, was honored by the Association County Commissioners of Georgia with its 2006 Wayne Shackelford Excellence in Government Award. Prior to his appointment to the superior court bench in 2002, Judge Nelson served 20 years as County Attorney for Bartow County.

✳ **Mr. Barry Champion**, Conasauga Superior Court Administrator, was honored on May 4, 2006 by the Conasauga Bar Association with its Liberty Bell Award. The award recognizes a non-attorney who has contributed significantly to the legal field.



Mr. Barry Champion.

The award was presented at the Law Day Ceremony opening the newly-expanded Whitfield County Courthouse.

Council of State Court Judges

✳ The Council of State Court Judges recently named **Mr. Bob Bray**, AOC Associate Director, as its new Executive Director. Mr. Bray has served as the Interim Executive Director after the deployment of **Mr. Stephan Frank** to Iraq and Louisiana.

Mr. Frank, a major in the US Army Reserve, is a graduate of Emory University and UGA School of Law. His work for the Council of State Court Judges began in January 2001. Mr. Frank has been named the trial court administrator of the Bell-Forsyth Judicial Circuit, effective August 2006.

Appointments

✳ **Ms. Avarita L. Hanson** has been named Executive Director of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism. Ms. Hanson replaces Ms. Sally Evans Lockwood who is now Director of Bar Admissions.

✳ **Ms. Aquaria Smith** began work as the Program Manager for the Board of Court Reporting on May 15, 2006. Ms. Smith previously worked as Legal Administrative Assistant for the AOC. She can be reached at 404-651-8707.

✳ Members of the Supreme Court Committee on Civil Justice were named on May 3, 2006, including **Judge Willie Lockette**, Superior Court, Dougherty Judicial Circuit; **Judge Wayne M. Purdom**, State Court of DeKalb County; **Judge William S. Duffey**, US District Court, Northern District; **Mr. Marc Gary**, Chair; and **Ms. Anne Lewis**, Vice Chair. For a full membership list, go to www.gasupreme.us

Initiatives of the Committee on Civil Justice include: promoting public understanding of access to justice problems, improving collaboration and training for advocate organizations, and encouraging lawyers and judges to take a leadership role in expanding access to justice.

2009 Mock Trial Championship

✳ The **Georgia High School Mock Trial Program** has been selected to host the 2009 National High School Mock Trial Championship. The event will take place at the Fulton County Courthouse in Atlanta in May 2009.

Judicial Council

✳ The **Judicial Council of Georgia** will meet on August 29, 2006, in Atlanta at the Wyndam Vinings Hotel. For more information about the meeting, contact Ms. Terry Cobb at 404-656-5171. ☞

Drug and DUI Court *cont.*

to Senior Judge John E. Girardeau of the Hall County Drug Court.

Featured Speakers

Sessions were offered on all facets of drug courts including the keynote speech by Judge Karen Freeman-Wilson, a panel of drug court graduates, round table discussions on a wide range of topics, breakout sessions by role, adult and juvenile concerns, mental health courts, grant writing, and others.



**Keynote Speaker
Judge Karen
Freeman-Wilson.**

Presenters for the conference were Dr. Fred Cheesman, National Center for State Courts; Ms. Gina Dunlap Cogswell, Assistant Director for the Cobb/Douglas Community Service Board; Mr. John Oliver Ellis, Jr., Chief Assistant Public Defender, DeKalb County; Judge Karen Freeman-Wilson, CEO, National Association of Drug Court Professionals; Mr. Carson L. Fox, Jr., National Drug Court Institute Fellow; Judge Stephen S. Goss, Dougherty Judicial Circuit; Dr. Leo H. Kadehjian, biomedical consultant; Ms. Jane H. Martin, AOC Governmental Affairs Division; Dr. Merrill Norton, President/CEO, Chemical Health Association, Inc.; Mr. Steven Phillip Page, Georgia Probation Management, Inc.; Dr. Roger Peters, University of South Florida; Dr. Brenda Rowe, Georgia Department of Human Resources;

Mr. Charles J. Sharp, Fredricksburg, Virginia, City Attorney; and Ms. Megan Wheeler, National Drug Court Institute.

Mobile Unit

The Cobb County Sheriff's Office demonstrated its Methamphetamine Lab Disassembly Mobile Unit, which contains and carries exterior lighting, an on-board generator, self-contained breathing apparatus, and other specialty equipment. The interior of the truck can also accommodate a small entry team. Officers from the Cobb



Cobb County Sheriff's officers (right) discuss the Methamphetamine Disassembly Truck with conference participants.

County Sheriff's Office were on hand to demonstrate the capabilities of the truck and answer questions.

National Conference

The National Association of Drug Court Professionals will host the 12th Annual Drug Court Training Conference on June 21-24, 2006, in Seattle, Washington. Two Georgia courts, the State Court of Clarke County and the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit drug court will be featured at the national meeting.

For more information on drug and DUI courts, contact Ms. Tonya Griesbach, Project Coordinator, AOC Governmental Affairs Division, at 404-656-6404 or griesbat@gaaoc.us ☎

Drug/DUI Court Conference Attendees

Superior Courts

Chief Judge Brenda Weaver

Appalachian Circuit

Chief Judge Doris Downs, Atlanta Circuit

Judge George Kreeger, Cobb Circuit

Judge Jack Partain, Conasauga Circuit

Chief Judge Tommy Day Wilcox

Macon Circuit

Judge Martha Christian, Macon Circuit

Chief Judge Joseph C. Bishop

Pataula Circuit

Judge Cynthia J. Becker

Stone Mountain Circuit

Judge William Fears, Towaliga Circuit

State Courts

Chief Judge Greg Fowler

Chatham County

Judge Kent Lawrence, Clarke County

Judge Melodie Clayton, Cobb County

Judge J. Antonio DelCampo

DeKalb County

Judge Carla Brown, Gwinnett County

Judge Joseph Iannazzone

Gwinnett County

Judge Jeanette Little, Troup County

Juvenile Courts

Judge Billy Waters, Alcovy Circuit

Judge John Worcester-Holland

Appalachian Circuit

Judge Juanita Stedman, Cobb Circuit

Judge Karen M. Calloway, Griffin Circuit

Judge Cliff Jolliff, Northeastern Circuit

Judge Philip Spivey, Ocmulgee Circuit

Other Courts

Judge Charles E. Auslander, III

Magistrate, Clarke County

Judge John E. Girardeau

Senior Judge of the Superior Courts

Judge Bert Crane

Senior Judge of the Courts of Georgia

Dougherty Mental Health Court Selected as National "Learning Site"

The Dougherty County Superior Court Mental Health and Substance Abuse Division was recently selected by the US Department of Justice as one of five sites to participate in its Mental Health Courts Program Learning Sites Initiative. Each learning site will act as a resource for jurisdictions across the



Judge Stephen Goss,
Dougherty Judicial Circuit.

country that are interested in developing and refining mental health

courts.

Sites will host interested jurisdictions over a two-year period, answer phone and e-mail questions, and work to develop standardized promotional materials.

Other courts selected by the Department of Justice were: Akron (Ohio) Municipal Mental Health Court;

Bonneville County (Idaho) Mental

Health Court; Bronx County (New York) Mental Health Court; and Reno (Nevada) Multi-Jurisdictional Mental Health Court.

In 2002, Judge Stephen Goss, Dougherty Judicial Circuit, established the first mental health court in Georgia. Mental health courts are now operating in both the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit and Northeastern Judicial Circuit. ♫

Supreme Court Webcasts Oral Arguments

On Tuesday, April 25, 2006, the Supreme Court of Georgia began live webcasts of oral arguments. While viewing of oral arguments is open to anyone, lawyers participating in the State Bar Transition Into Law Practice Program can obtain CLE credit by registering at www.gabar.org/ programs

Supreme court webcasts are generally scheduled for the last day of oral arguments each month.

Oral arguments on the same-sex marriage amendment ruling by Judge Constance Russell will be broadcast on June 27, 2006.

For more information and to view the web-cast visit www.gasupreme.us and access the Oral Arguments: Live Web-cast link. The calendar of cases and summaries of cases are posted on the court's website. ♫

2006-2007 Georgia Courts Directory

Have you verified your information? Be sure your name, address, phone and fax numbers are correct! If you have not returned your postcard, call Ashley Stollar at 404-656-6783 or e-mail stollara@gaaoc.us

The 2006-2007 Georgia Courts Directory is currently in production and will be available soon! Look for your complimentary copy in August. Additional copies are \$25. ♫

District Administrative Judges

New Superior Court District Administrative Judges have been elected as follows:

Judge Ronnie Joe Lane

Second District

Chief Judge R. Rucker Smith

Third District

Judge A. Quillian Baldwin

Sixth District

Chief Judge Shepherd Lee Howell

Seventh District

Judge J. Stanley Smith

Eighth District

Judge David E. Barrett

Ninth District

All other district administrative judges are continuing their terms. ♫



*Please
Recycle*

spotlight: AOC Research Section

Annual Case Count and New Workload Assessment Study

Ms. Yolanda Lewis, Senior Research Associate, was interviewed for this feature. Ms. Lewis has worked for the AOC for two years; she earned her Bachelor and Master degrees from the University of South Alabama in Mobile, Alabama.

Annual Case Count

Q. Which classes of court are required to submit annual caseload data?

A. While the superior courts are the only courts that are statutorily mandated to report their caseload data to the AOC, we request information from state, juvenile, probate, magistrate, and municipal courts.

Q. Why count cases?

A. The workload of courts of limited jurisdiction affects the workload of the superior courts and must be taken into consideration for judgeship recommendations. Counties with a state court, for example, might see the workload of the superior court impacted.

Q. How is the data submitted?

A. There are no hard and fast rules, though we do provide a standard format for everyone to use. We receive the data in a variety of ways: by fax, e-mail, and letters. In some instances, a staff member manually counts caseload data in criminal cases. Civil data is provided from the Superior Court Clerk's Cooperative Authority via the AOC Information Technology Section.

Q. Who collects the data locally?

A. We receive the data from a variety of sources including District Court Administrators, clerks of court, and, in some cases, judges themselves.



Ms. Yolanda Lewis of the AOC.

Q. Do you find that courts are complying with your requests?

A. Yes. A Clerk's Forum sponsored by the Research Section for the past two years has been a great success. As a result, we have received 100% reporting from the superior courts, state courts, and juvenile courts in the

state. Magistrate and probate courts now average 90-95% reporting.

Q. How long does it take to compile (and verify) caseload data annually?

A. About eight months: during January through May research staff compile the numbers. Each court's data is submitted to the District Court Administrator and local judges for verification. The final numbers for a given year, usually presented to the Judicial Council at its August meeting, are used in evaluating superior court judgeship requests.

Q. If a judge or court administrator feels a new judgeship is needed in their circuit, what steps should be taken for the Judicial Council to consider their request?

A. AOC Research publishes a guide that details the required steps. To receive a copy of the guide, contact me at 404-656-6412.

Court of Appeals Centennial Year



Current members of the Court of Appeals are adding their insights and observations to a documentary video chronicling the court's century of service.

Here Judge A. Harris Adams (right) answers questions from Mr. Bob McAteer about his judicial career. ☺

Spotlight: AOC Research Section

Underway Through Summer Months

Q. Once the Judicial Council makes a recommendation, does that mean a new judgeship is assured?

A. No. A judgeship bill must be introduced in the General Assembly. The Judicial Council's recommendation is taken into consideration, but any judgeship bill is subject to the normal legislative process and must also be approved by the Governor, if it passes the General Assembly.

Q. Is the annual caseload information for Georgia Courts published?

A. Yes, each year the caseload data is published in the Annual Report on the Work of the Georgia Courts and caseload data for 2002, 2003, and 2004 is available at www.research.georgiacourts.org/review.htm

Q. I want to compare data from before 2002. How can I get the caseload for 1996, for instance?

A. Take a look at our website where Annual Reports from 1994 to the present are posted. For the years 2000-2003, the state caseload reports were published in Research Review which is also available at www.georgiacourts.org/aoc/publications.html

Time & Motion Study

Q. Some of the state's superior court judges are now participating in a Workload Assessment or Time and Motion Study. Why?

A. A study, conducted by the National Center for State Courts in 2000, recommended periodic updates. This summer we will track length of time needed to move a specific case type from filing to disposition. Judges will log information on time spent on the bench as well as time expended on a case outside the courtroom.

Q. So there have been significant changes since 2000?

A. Georgia's population continues to increase. By 2010, Georgia is expected to be the eighth most populous state in the country. Other factors have influenced the need for a new study, including the creation of the Paulding Judicial Circuit, an increase in the number of judgeships, jurisdictional changes implemented since the initial study, and growing caseload.

Q. Who is participating in the study?

A. Judges in 41 counties have agreed to keep detailed time records over a nine-week period.

Q. How were those judges chosen?

A. Counties were selected based on certain geographic and demographic characteristics. Then chief judges of the circuits of selected counties were asked to agree to participate.

Q. How long will the study last?

A. A 90 day period (April 17 - August 23) was selected to gain a "snapshot of time." Based on data submitted, we should be able to accurately estimate the time required for each type of case category.

Q. Is this current study being conducted by the NCSC?

A. No. The Judicial Council Judicial Workload Assessment Committee, chaired by Chief Judge Joe C. Bishop of the Pataula Circuit, is overseeing the current study. AOC Research supports the committee to coordinate meetings, provide training and resources, collect and compile the data.

Q. Ultimately what will be done with the information that is gathered?

A. Our findings will be presented to the Judicial Council for use in determining new case-weight values for future judgeship studies.

Q. Are there any plans for assessments in other courts?

A. Yes, the probate courts. ☺

Contact Ms. Yolanda Lewis at 404-656-6412 for more information on the work of AOC Research.

Cognitive Disabilities Conference Hosted in Atlanta

The "Persons with Cognitive Disabilities and the Courts Conference" held recently at the State Bar Conference Center in Atlanta attracted 70 local and national participants. Sponsored by the Georgia Commission on Access and Fairness in the Courts and the State Coordinator for the Americans with Disabilities Act, the conference focused attention on improving access to the justice system for this specialized group of court constituents.

A workshop entitled *Judicial Perspectives* presented by Judge Cindy Morris of the Conasauga Judicial Circuit and Judge Susan P. Tate of Athens-Clarke County Probate Court offered insight on the ethical obligation of judges in assist-



(Left - right) Judge Susan Tate, Judge Cindy Morris and Mr. Marc Wilkerson, State ADA Coordinator's Office moderate the "Judicial Perspectives" workshop.



(Left - right) Mr. William Edwards of Los Angeles, CA; Ms. Anna Saxman of Vermont; Ms. Kerri Martin of Pennsylvania; and Mr. Ron Braswell, Albany, Georgia discuss Programs for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities.

ing cognitively-disabled defendants while also maintaining impartiality and fairness. Often cognitive disabilities are not easily identifiable and may become apparent to the judge during the course of a hearing.

Mr. Ron Braswell, Program Director for the Albany Advocacy Resource Center, participated in the *Programs for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities* panel which discussed local criminal justice programs designed to assist defendants with cognitive disabilities.

Contact Ms. Stephanie Chambliss, AOC Court Services Division, at (404) 463-3927 for additional information or to receive a report of the conference proceedings. ☞

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